

REMARKS

Claims 51-55 and 61 have been objected to due to a number of informalities. The claims have been amended to obviate the Examiner's objection.

Claims 50-55 and 57-61 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by White et al, U.S. Patent No. 6,447,176.

The Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Applicant's invention as currently amended is directed to a method of loading a film assembly, wherein the method includes a first film container having an internal spool and an additional spoolless film container having a length of film, a majority of which is wound in the spoolless film container and extends to the first film container. The sequential steps include providing a bulk roll of film, withdrawing a free end therefrom and securing the same to a film winding tool. In a dark environment, rotating the film winding tool to wind the film into a coil about the tool. The wound coil is removed from the film winding tool and is enclosed in the additional film container such that the film extends through a film slot thereof. The film which has been unwound from the bulk roll is cut before or after removing the wound coil from the winding tool and wherein the film has a trailing end which is secured to the first film container.

On the other hand, White'176 is directed to a film canister device for used in a film package assembly along with a method for loading a camera. However, the film canister device 12 of White'176, which has been equated with our 'additional spoolless film container', has a relatively complicated structure. The structure includes inner and outer sleeve arrangements which are required to undergo a relative twisting motion in order to mis-align the respective slots/openings to form a light-tight enclosure, and additionally require relative twisting in order to allow the film to be unwound.

The disclosure of the White'176 film package does teach that the film to be wound into the film canister device may be unwound from a bulk roll of film. It further describes that the film may be withdrawn from the bulk roll and wound into a roll about the winding tool. The Applicant does agree that this is similar to the Applicant's invention. However, the subsequent steps are not equivalent to the present invention. Column 8 of White'176 specifically, lines 33-38, described that when using a bulk roll of film, an appropriate amount of film is rolled around the wounding tool. The film is then cut off from the bulk roll and the end opposite the film leader, i.e. the freshly-cut end, is firmly fixed within a film cartridge. It is only subsequently that the roll of film wound about the tool is placed inside the film canister device (see lines 51-56) with the film still wound onto the tool being placed first in the inner sleeve assembly, the tool retracted and then the outer sleeve assembly fitted over the inner sleeve assembly in order to form the complete assembled film package assembly.

Thus, it is clearly disclosed that the film is first connected to the film cartridge, which is equivalent to the Applicant's first film container, and then subsequently the wound coil secured in the film canister device. Moreover, all of the process steps of White'176 from start to finish must necessarily be carried out in a dark environment since the last step is placing the wound coil in the film canister device. Column 9 of White'176, lines 14 to 17, which confirm that "after the film package assembly 14 is assembled, further handling of the film package assembly can be performed in non-dark conditions." In contrast, the present invention requires that the attachment of the cut trailing end of the film cut from the bulk roll to the first film container is the last process step and certainly occurs after the wound coil is enclosed in the additional film container. The significance of this is that by enclosing the wound coil in the first film container, any subsequent steps including film cutting, if this is done after step c, and securing to the first film container can be done in daylight conditions. This is a significant procedural advantage.

The film assembly of the Applicant's invention is for use in cameras of a type which are, while not necessarily single-use, are intended to be used only a minimal number of times. With cameras of this type and film packages of this type, the cost of the camera and film components is absolutely critical for its commercial viability. As a result, the time expended in film loading and winding in order to produce the film assembly and the ease of such processing is also highly critical. The loading/winding technique of the invention, in which several steps can be carried out in daylight conditions, can be carried out with considerably greater ease and more quickly and efficiently as compared to the procedure of White'176. None of these problems or indeed the solutions thereto are appreciated by the White'176 reference.

In relation to claims 54 and 61, and new claims 63 and 65, it is important to note that the White reference does not disclose the use of an additional film container having what one would normally understand by "two half shells" but rather has a construction requiring inner and outer cooperating sleeves. The structure is now further recited in amended claims 54 and 61 to recite the presence of opposed edge regions at which the shell halves are joinable. Thus, the Applicant's invention is not anticipated by White'176.

Claim 56 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over White et al'176 in view of Streisslinger et al, U.S. Patent No. 3,276,714. Claim 62 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over White et al'176 in view of Dobbs et al, U.S. Patent No. 5,765,062.

The Examiner's rejections are respectfully traversed.

As these claims are dependent on the main independent claim, which the Applicant believes is patentably distinguishable from the prior art of record, the dependent claims are also patentable.

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that the amended claims and the claims dependent there from are in proper form. The Applicant respectfully contends that the teachings of White'1 76 do not anticipate the claimed invention under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. §102(b). Thus, claims 50-55 and 57-61 are considered to be patently distinguishable over the prior art of record.

The application is now considered to be in condition for allowance, and an early indication of same is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arlene J. Powers', is written over a horizontal line.

Arlene J. Powers
Registration No. 35,985
Gauthier & Connors LLP
225 Franklin Street, Suite 2300
Boston, Massachusetts 02110
Telephone: (617) 426-9180
Extension 110